

Thoughts on the Daily Word

14th Week of Year. Tuesday 8th July. Readings: Genesis 32:23-33; Psalm: 16; Matthew 9:32-37.

Jacob is a fascinating figure who becomes Israel and the patriarch who endows the people of God with a new name. He seems to be a dodgy character and basically weak, compared to his brother Esau and his father-in-law Laban. His gift is being a pastoralist, in every sense. He knows how to grow his flocks and grow his family. The twelve tribes begin here, the foundation of the future nation. The Gospel describes the nation as being like sheep without shepherds. This is a challenging image for us as we are rethinking just what shepherding means in our time. For all his failures Israel provides the pattern of nurturing the tribe or nation that will become the pattern of being the People of God.